



Bishop's *Circular*

For Priests / Sisters

Bishop George Rajendran sdb

Diocese of Thuckalay

Bishop's House, P B No: 12, Thuckalay PO,
Kanya kumari Dt- 629 175, Tamil Nadu, India

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Dear and Rev. Fathers,

Greetings and prayerful wishes from Bishop's House, Thuckalay!

It is with immense joy and profound gratitude to Almighty God that I write to you today concerning the historic election of His Holiness Pope Leo XIV as the successor of Saint Peter and the visible head of the universal Catholic Church. As we witness this momentous occasion in the life of our Church, I invite you to join me in reflecting upon the significance of this papal election and the remarkable journey that has led Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost of the United States to the Chair of Peter as the first American pontiff in the Church's 2,000-year history.

The white smoke that rose from the Sistine Chapel on 8 May 2025 announced to the world that the College of Cardinals had chosen a new Supreme Pontiff. When Cardinal Prevost stepped onto the central loggia of Saint Peter's Basilica and was presented to the faithful as Pope Leo XIV, the universal Church received not merely a new administrator but a pastor whose life had been marked by deep spirituality, pastoral sensitivity, and unwavering commitment to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. On 29 May 2025, I had the singular privilege of interacting with our Holy Father at the Vatican, presenting our Eparchy to him for his paternal blessing.

Life of Pope Leo XIV

His Holiness Pope Leo XIV was born Robert Francis Prevost on 14 September 1955, at Mercy Hospital in the Bronzeville neighbourhood of Chicago, Illinois, on the city's South Side. Prevost has two older brothers, Louis Martín and John Joseph, and is of African, French, Italian, and Spanish descent. His father, Louis Marius Prevost, was of French and Italian descent, and his mother, Mildred Martínez, was of Spanish descent. According to those who knew the family, the Prevosts were devout Catholics who never missed church and were actively involved within their parish.

Young Robert grew up in the southern suburbs of Dolton, where his family's deep Catholic faith profoundly shaped his early formation. The seeds of his religious vocation were nurtured in this environment of authentic piety and devotion to the Church. His multicultural heritage, reflecting the rich diversity of American Catholicism, would later serve him well in his ministry to diverse communities worldwide.

Robert graduated from Villanova University in Pennsylvania with a degree in mathematics, then studied theology at the Catholic Theological Union of Chicago, where he earned a Master's of Divinity. Leo entered the novitiate of the Order of Saint Augustine in the province of Our Lady of Good Counsel, in Saint Louis, in 1977. At the age of 27, he was sent to Rome to study, and he was ordained as a priest in 1982. He went on to earn a doctorate in canon law from the Pontifical College of St Thomas Aquinas in Rome.

The academic formation of our Holy Father reflected both intellectual rigour and practical pastoral preparation. The Augustinian charism, with its emphasis on community life, scholarly pursuit, and pastoral care, would deeply influence his approach to ministry throughout his priestly and episcopal career. A seminary classmate described him as “very calm, but extremely intelligent, and extremely compassionate,” noting that “he is not a showboat” but rather demonstrates understated competence and genuine humility.

A Missionary in Peru

What distinguishes Pope Leo XIV’s formation from many of his predecessors is his extensive missionary experience in Latin America. As an Augustinian priest, Robert worked for a decade in Trujillo, Peru, and was later appointed bishop of Chiclayo, another Peruvian city, where he served from 2014 to 2023. His work in Peru was so significant that he became known in Rome as the “Latin Yankee” for the decades he spent ministering to the dispossessed and marginalised.

Robert is a dual citizen of the United States and Peru. The American-born pontiff obtained Peruvian citizenship in August 2015. This decision to become a Peruvian citizen reflects his deep commitment to the people he served and his understanding that effective pastoral ministry requires genuine incarnation in the local culture and community.

In 1999, Robert was elected Provincial Prior of the Augustinian Province of “Mother of Good Counsel” in Chicago. Two and a half years later, the ordinary General Chapter of the Order of Saint Augustine elected him as Prior General, confirming him in 2007 for a second term. The new pontiff used his first remarks to say he is a son of St Augustine, and he quoted the saint’s famous phrase: “For you, I am a bishop, with you, after all, I am a Christian.”

Episcopal Ministry and Vatican Service

In October 2013, Robert returned to his Augustinian Province in Chicago, serving as director of formation at the Saint Augustine Convent, first councillor, and provincial vicar—roles he held until Pope Francis appointed him on 3 November 2014, as Apostolic Administrator of the Peruvian Diocese of Chiclayo, elevating him to the episcopal dignity as Titular Bishop of Sufar.

Bishop Robert entered the Diocese on 7 November, in the presence of Apostolic Nuncio James Patrick Green, who ordained him Bishop just over a month later, on 12 December, the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, in the Cathedral of Saint Mary. On 26 September 2015, he was appointed Bishop of Chiclayo by Pope Francis.

As Bishop of Chiclayo, Cardinal Prevost demonstrated exceptional pastoral leadership in a diocese that served approximately half a million people in northern Peru. His episcopal ministry was characterised by special attention to the poor and marginalised, reflecting the Church’s preferential option for those on the peripheries. In March 2018, he was elected second vice president of the Peruvian Episcopal Conference, where he also served as a member of the Economic Council and as president of the Commission for Culture and Education.

In 2019, Pope Francis appointed Bishop Robert a member of the Congregation for the Clergy (13 July 2019), and in 2020, a member of the Congregation for Bishops (12 November). Meanwhile, on 15 April 2020, he was also appointed Apostolic Administrator of the Peruvian Diocese of Callao.

Cardinal and Prefect of the Dicastery for Bishops

Pope Francis's confidence in Cardinal Robert's abilities led to his appointment to one of the most important positions in the Vatican. On 30 January 2023, the Pope appointed Robert to be the prefect of the Dicastery for Bishops, which is responsible for evaluating bishop candidates and making recommendations for new appointments. He also served as the president of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America. This role positioned him at the heart of the Church's governance, as the Dicastery for Bishops is responsible for the selection and appointment of bishops worldwide, except in those territories under the jurisdiction of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches and the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples. He was also promoted to the rank of Archbishop.

Pope Francis created Bishop Robert a Cardinal in the Consistory of 30 September 2023 and assigned him the Diaconate of Saint Monica. The choice of Saint Monica as his titular church was particularly fitting, as she was the mother of Saint Augustine and a model of persistent prayer and maternal care for the Church.

As head of the Dicastery, Cardinal Robert participated in the Pope's most recent Apostolic Journeys and in both the first and second sessions of the 16th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on synodality, held in Rome from 4 October to 29 October 2023, and from 2 October to 27 October 2024, respectively.

The Papal Election and the Significance of Leo XIV

Cardinal Robert Prevost was elected pope on 8 May 2025, the second day of the conclave, on the fourth ballot. The 133 cardinals gathered in a secret conclave in Rome to elect a new pope for the Catholic Church following the death of Pope Francis on 21 April. Leo was chosen just two days after a group of 133 cardinals gathered in conclave to select a new pontiff, suggesting that he quickly impressed his peers during the secretive process.

The speed of Cardinal Prevost's election suggests that the College of Cardinals recognised in him the qualities needed to lead the universal Church in our contemporary context. In pre-conclave speculation, Prevost was considered a dark horse compared to more prominent papabile. However, he was noted to be an ally of Pope Francis and a possible compromise candidate.

The last Pope to take the name Leo, Pope Leo XIII, was a Pope who stood in solidarity with the poor and advocated for the rights of workers. Leo XIII, who served as Pope from 1878 to 1903, placed a strong emphasis on workers' rights and Catholic social doctrine; therefore, the choice of that name for the new pontiff makes a significant statement. His papal name was inspired by Pope Leo XIII, who developed modern Catholic social teaching amid the Second Industrial Revolution. Leo XIV believes the ongoing Fourth Industrial Revolution, particularly advances in artificial intelligence and robotics, poses "new challenges for the defence of human dignity, justice, and labour."

Pastoral Style and Vision

As the new Pope addressed the crowds in St Peter's Square, Leo paid tribute to the late pontiff Francis, urging them to remember the late pope's legacy of unity before outlining his vision for the Catholic Church. "We have to seek together to be a missionary Church. A Church that builds bridges and dialogue," he said.

In some ways, Leo follows the mould of Pope Francis, who died last month at 88. He has long espoused a commitment to social justice issues, and two years ago, he described his vision for the Church, with goals

of “reaching out to the poor, to the neediest, to those on the margins” — in language mirroring that of Francis.

Pope Leo aligns with Francis on the direction of the church and the process to foster a more inclusive global church, but he is expected to lead as his own person. Leo is expected to lean more progressive on social issues, such as migration and poverty, but fall more in line with moderates on moral issues related to Catholic doctrine.

Pope Leo XIV’s approach to liturgy also reflects his deep respect for tradition combined with pastoral sensitivity. During his service in Peru, Prevost was described as an “impeccable dresser” when it came to celebrating the Mass, wearing full vestments even when summer temperatures rose above 85°F in Chiclayo. In August 2024, speaking to a Chicago-area parish, Prevost stated that “liturgy needs to be beautiful to help us, to strengthen us in our faith.”

Significance for the Syro-Malabar Church

The election of Pope Leo XIV holds particular significance for us as clergy of the Syro-Malabar Church. A citizen of the United States by birth, Leo XIV is the first pope to have been born in North America, the first to hold Peruvian citizenship (having been naturalised in 2015), the second Pope from the Americas (after his predecessor Francis), and the first from the Order of Saint Augustine.

Pope’s experience as a missionary in Peru, where he learned to adapt his ministry to local cultures while maintaining doctrinal fidelity, offers valuable insights for our apostolic work. As Eastern Catholics, we must also navigate the tension between preserving our rich liturgical and theological traditions and engaging effectively with contemporary pastoral challenges.

Pope Leo XIV’s emphasis on the beauty of liturgy resonates deeply with our Eastern Catholic understanding of worship as a participation in the heavenly liturgy. His careful attention to liturgical detail and reverent celebration of the sacred mysteries should inspire us to approach our celebration of the Divine Liturgy with renewed devotion and a keen eye for beauty.

The Holy Father’s commitment to serving the poor and marginalised challenges us to examine our pastoral priorities. Are we truly reaching out to those on the peripheries of our communities? Are we building bridges of dialogue and understanding with those who have drifted away from the Church?

A Call to Renewed Pastoral Commitment

As we welcome Pope Leo XIV to the Chair of Peter, let us renew our commitment to the pastoral mission of the Church. Pope Leo is a member of the Augustinian religious order, which is spread across the world. He led the order for more than a decade as its prior general. His experience in religious life reminds us that effective pastoral ministry requires both contemplative depth and active engagement with the world.

I encourage each of you to study the pastoral approach of our new Holy Father, particularly his ability to combine fidelity to Catholic teaching with pastoral sensitivity and cultural adaptation. His years of missionary work demonstrate that authentic inculturation does not compromise doctrinal integrity but rather helps the Gospel message take root more deeply in human hearts.

Let us also pray for the success of Pope Leo XIV’s pontificate, especially as he faces the challenges of leading the Church in an increasingly complex global context.

As priests of the Syro-Malabar Church, our communion with the Bishop of Rome is not merely a canonical requirement but a profound expression of the unity of the Catholic Church. Pope Leo XIV's election reminds us that this unity transcends cultural, national, and even ritual boundaries. The fact that an American missionary who spent decades in Peru can now lead the universal Church demonstrates the truly Catholic nature of our faith.

The new Pope's voting records indicate that he has actively participated in American democratic processes, having voted in the 2024 general election, as well as in the 2012, 2008, 2004, and 2000 cycles. This civic engagement, combined with his international pastoral experience, positions him well to address the complex relationship between faith and public life in our contemporary world.

We must support the Holy Father not only through our prayers but also through our faithful implementation of his pastoral guidance and our witness to the unity that characterises the Catholic Church. Our own liturgical and spiritual traditions are enriched when they are lived in communion with the wider Church under the leadership of the successor of Peter.

NEWS AND EVENTS

Pastoral Council at Sangamam: The third meeting of the Seventh Pastoral Council was held at Sangamam on 01 May 2025. The inaugural session began at 9:45 AM with a prayer led by Rev. Fr. Jose Muttathupadam. Mr. Clinton, one of the council members, welcomed everyone, and Mr. Shonic Regan, the Joint Secretary, presented the minutes of the previous meeting. I presided over the meeting and delivered the introductory address. The resource person for the day, Rev. Fr. Joseph Santhosh, presented the key points from the Pastoral Exhortation of the Major Archbishop, issued following the Fifth Major Archiepiscopal Assembly, along with the recommendations and suggestions of the Synod of Bishops of the Syro-Malabar Church. Based on the document titled *Empowerment through Renewal*, he focused on the Church's action plan for the renewal of faith formation, the strengthening of the lay faithful for evangelization, and the empowerment of the Syro-Malabar community.

Following the input session, the council members engaged in group discussions based on prepared questions. The members participated in seven pre-existing groups and formulated their suggestions. The secretary of each group then presented their proposals to be included in the Church's action plan. In the afternoon session, the groups presented the reports of their previous meetings, focusing on the areas of Liturgy, Catechism, Youth Apostolate, Evangelization, Education, Public Welfare, and Family Apostolate. After the presentations, time was allotted for raising concerns or questions for the common good of the Diocese. At the conclusion of the meeting, students who had completed their diploma at Sinai Theological Institute were honoured with certificates and awards. Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil presided over the award ceremony. The meeting concluded at 3:30 PM with a vote of thanks delivered by Mr. John, the Secretary. I express my sincere gratitude to Rev. Fr. Thomas Sathianesan, the Director, and his team for their excellent coordination in organizing this third meeting of the Seventh Pastoral Council.

Priestly Ordination of Dn. Anoop Thathappally: Every priest is a cherished blessing to the Church, and we have every reason to rejoice and give thanks to God for the gift of a new priest. On 03 May 2025, at St. Mary's Forane Church, Kaduthuruthi, Deacon Augustine (Anoop) Thathappally was ordained to the sacred priesthood. The profound homily delivered by Rev. Fr. Joji Marangattu CMI deeply touched the hearts of all who were present. Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil served as the archdeacon for the ordination ceremony. As an eparchy, we joyfully welcome Rev. Fr. Anoop Thathappally and pray that he may be richly blessed by God in his pastoral ministry. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the Parish Priest and the parishioners of Kaduthuruthi for their exceptional efforts in organizing the ordination ceremony so meaningfully.

Consecration of St. Michael's Church, Thettivilai: The mission at Thettivilai was initiated in 1963 by Rev. Fr. Joseph Madathil through house visits, catechesis, and social service activities. On 05 January 1964, the first baptism was administered to 79 individuals. Prayer meetings were initially conducted in the homes of parishioners. Later, the land where the present church stands was purchased, and under the leadership of Rev. Fr. Thomas Muttathukunnel, the first church was constructed. On 15 January 1968, the then Archbishop of Changanacherry, the Servant of God Mar Mathew Kavukattu, visited Thettivilai Church. However, due to a shortage of missionaries and certain external factors, the celebration of the Holy Qurbana ceased from 1974 onwards. The Holy Qurbana resumed on 15 August 2001, coinciding with the Feast of the Assumption of Our Lady and India's Independence Day. Unfortunately, from the following month onwards, legal cases were filed against the Church and its liturgical celebrations, leading to numerous challenges over the past 25 years. Meanwhile, the old church building deteriorated significantly and became unsafe for liturgical use. Due to ongoing legal disputes, the construction of a new church could not begin until the court issued a final verdict permitting the reconstruction in 2024. Thanks to the tireless efforts and leadership of Rev. Fr. Augustine Thalodil, the new church was constructed within a short time and prepared for public worship.

The consecration of the newly built church took place on 04 May 2025 at 2:30 PM. I presided over the ceremony. The Holy Qurbana was concelebrated by Rev. Fr. Jose Muttathupadam and Rev. Fr. Joshy Kulathumkal. Following the Qurbana, a felicitation gathering was held inside the church. On behalf of the diocese, I expressed deep gratitude to Rev. Fr. Augustine Thalodil for his committed service in realizing the dream of a new church at Thettivilai. I also extended heartfelt thanks to all who worked tirelessly to obtain justice through the civil court, particularly Adv. Justinar and our Vicar General, Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil. An agape meal was served to all attendees after the public meeting. Once again, I sincerely thank the Parish Priest and the parishioners of Thettivilai for their excellent coordination and wholehearted involvement in organizing this blessed event.

Priests' Conference: The Priests' Conference for the month of May was held at Sangamam on 05 May 2025. The gathering began with one hour of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, led by Fr. Sajan Nettareppan. The conference officially commenced at 11:00 AM, coordinated by the Chancellor, Rev. Fr. Joshy Kulathumkal, and presided over by me. Following the prayer song, led by Rev. Fr. Martin Kandamparampil MST, a moment of silent prayer was observed in memory of Pope Francis. Rev. Fr. Joshy extended a warm welcome to all. In the absence of the Presbyterium Secretary, Rev. Fr. Linto Thakidiyil presented the minutes of the previous Priests' Conference, which were then approved by the assembly. As a gesture of gratitude to the priests who have completed their ministry in the diocese and are returning to their respective dioceses or congregations, a video presentation was shared by Pulari Communications. Rev. Fr. Mijo Puthenpurayil expressed heartfelt thanks to them on behalf of the diocese. We remain deeply grateful to the following priests who have completed their service and have now returned:

Rev. Fr. Augustin Thalodil: Fr. Thalodil served our Diocese over the past twenty-five years. He spent the most fruitful years of his life in the vineyard of Thuckalay, offering his time, energy, and spiritual zeal to the people of God entrusted to his care. His contributions have left an indelible mark on the spiritual and physical landscape of Thuckalay. His remarkable commitment to building six beautiful churches—at **Thettiyode, Annikkarai, Mezhaode, Manjalumoodu, Kunnavilai and Thettivilai**—stands today as a testament to his perseverance, courage, and faith amidst countless challenges. Beyond these magnificent churches, his tireless efforts in constructing numerous *Kurissadys* and Grottos have enriched the devotional life of our faithful. Even during his short tenure at our minor seminary, his love for the Church and the formation of future priests was evident. The beautiful grotto he built there, and his commitment to the spiritual, pastoral, human, and intellectual

formation of our seminarians, remain deeply appreciated. As he returned to his home diocese of Palai, we express our profound gratitude for his invaluable service to the Diocese.

Rev. Fr. Martin Kandamparampil MST: Fr. Martin served the Diocese from 2022 to 2025, and in these three years, his hard work and dedication toward the spiritual growth of our faithful have been a great blessing. We remember his devoted pastoral ministry—first as the Parish Priest at Anamugham and Pathukani for two years, and then as the Forane Parish Priest at Manjalumoodu for one year. His willingness to learn the Tamil language and immerse himself in our culture truly reflects his missionary spirit and pastoral heart. His blessed voice brought much joy and life to our presbyteral gatherings, where he often animated the events through singing. Furthermore, his dynamic involvement in the ministries of CML and SMYM, particularly as Forane Director, has greatly inspired and energized our youth and children. As he returned to the Missionary Society of St. Thomas the Apostle (MST), we express our profound gratitude for his invaluable service to the Diocese.

Rev. Fr. Michael Arokiasamy SDB: Fr. Michael served the Diocese from 2022 to 2025, and over these three years, his hard work and dedication to the development of the College have been a true blessing. Since 2022, he served as the Director of Academics at St. Alphonsa College, and from May 2023, he was entrusted with the responsibility of Principal. Under his capable leadership, the College has grown significantly. Beyond his ministry in the College, Fr. Michael integrated himself into our presbyterium, becoming a close friend and collaborator to many priests. He participated actively in both formal and informal clergy gatherings and generously offered his service in preaching the Word of God during common liturgical celebrations. Now he went back to take up further responsibilities in his Province and we remain deeply grateful for his contributions and leadership.

Rev. Fr. Chacko Puthiyaparampil: Fr. Chacko served the Diocese from July 2023 onwards as Spiritual Director in our Minor Seminary. His exemplary life has been a true inspiration to both the priests and seminarians of our Diocese. Over the past two years, he has offered sound spiritual guidance and accompanied our seminarians with compassion and motherly concern, especially during their difficult moments. His ministry as Spiritual Father has been of immense value, and the Diocese remains deeply indebted to him for his contributions during this period.

Following the reply speech by Rev. Fr. Martin Kandamparampil MST, the presbyterium warmly welcomed the newly ordained priest, Rev. Fr. Sunil Antony, along with other newcomers to the diocese: Rev. Fr. Bobby Kochuparampil MST and Rev. Fr. Varghese Kottoor CMI. I extended a heartfelt welcome to each of them. Fr. Seby Manimalakandathil, who rejoined the presbyterium after completing a year of pastoral service in Saudi Arabia, was also warmly welcomed. After the first session, Rev. Fr. Joshy Kulathumkal presented the reports of the recent Forane Conferences as well as the joint meeting of Religious Superiors, Curia members, and Forane Vicars. Subsequently, time was allotted for the Directors of various departments to share updates and important information related to their respective ministries. In my presidential address, I offered practical guidance to be followed during the transfer of priests from one place to another, emphasizing pastoral responsibility and smooth transitions. The meeting concluded with a blessing at 1:45 PM. I extend my sincere gratitude to all the Fathers for their active participation, valuable insights, and meaningful contributions that ensured the success of the conference.

Blessing of a new convent at Chenamcode: For the past 25 years, the Assisi FCC Convent at Chenamcode had been functioning on the first floor of Assisi Vidyalaya. To ensure the smooth functioning of the school and to provide a more suitable residence for the Sisters, a separate convent building was constructed. The blessing of the newly built convent took place on 05 May 2025 at 5:00 PM. I presided over the ceremony, and the Holy Qurbana was concelebrated by Rev. Fr. Jose Muttathupadam and Rev. Fr. Joshy Kulathumkal. The celebration was followed by a short public gathering during which Rev. Sr. Celia FCC, the Provincial

Superior, expressed her heartfelt thanks to all those present. I take this opportunity to appreciate the Provincial Team for realizing the vision of a beautiful and well-planned convent.

Vestition and First Profession at Marappady: On 08 May 2025, at St. Thomas Church, Marappady, Sr. S. Jeniba, a novice belonging to the SH St. Mathew Province, Changanacherry, joyfully received her religious habit and made her First Profession. The liturgical celebration, which I presided over, began at 2:00 PM. Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil, Rev. Fr. Vinod Kanakkalil, Rev. Fr. Paul Vadakumury, and Rev. Fr. Liju Marattukalam concelebrated the Holy Qurbana. Following the liturgy, a short felicitation gathering was held during which representatives from the parish and various congregations extended their greetings to the newly professed Sister. Sr. Jeniba expressed her heartfelt thanks to all present. I extend my warmest congratulations to Sr. Jeniba on this blessed occasion and offer my best wishes as she begins her journey in religious life. May she continue to inspire others by radiating the values of her vocation. I also express my sincere gratitude to the Parish Priest of Marappady, Rev. Fr. Mijo Puthenpurayil, and to the parishioners for their commendable efforts in organizing the liturgy and the entire celebration so meaningfully.

Habemus Papam: Pope Leo XIV: On 08 May 2025, white smoke rose from the roof of the Sistine Chapel, signalling the election of a new Pope. From the central loggia of Saint Peter's Basilica, Cardinal Protodeacon Dominique Mamberti proclaimed the traditional formula "Habemus Papam", announcing to the city of Rome and to the whole world the election of Robert Francis Cardinal Prevost as Pope Leo XIV. In the circular, I have explained in detail the biography of the new Pope. Our entire diocese had been praying fervently for the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the election of the new Pope. Now, with grateful hearts, let us pray with Peter and for Peter. During my visit to Rome, I had the privilege of meeting the Holy Father personally during the General Audience on 28 May 2025. On behalf of the Diocese, I conveyed our prayers, best wishes, and wholehearted support for his new ministry as the Vicar of Christ.

Mathru Jyothis Annual Day Celebration at Padanthalumoodu: The Annual Day celebrations of Mathru Jyothis were held at the auditorium of Sacred Heart Forane Church, Padanthalumoodu, on 11 May 2025 at 2:00 PM. Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil presided over the function, and Mrs. Beena Joshy, President of the Syro-Malabar Global Mathru Jyothis, along with Adv. Sumithra, were the chief guests of the day. Many priests and religious sisters were also present for the event. The Best Forane Director Award was presented to Rev. Fr. Jose Vayalil of Manjalumoodu Forane. The Best Unit Award was awarded to St. Thomas Church, Muzhucode, and among the parishes with fewer than 60 families, the award was won by Christ the King Church, Paraicode. Around 500 mothers participated in the celebration, and each forane presented a cultural performance. Prizes for various competitions were distributed to the winners. A special highlight of the day was the exhibition of the handwritten Bible, organized in connection with the event. During the meeting, a book on Mother Mary, edited by Rev. Fr. Jimmy Thekkekadumathil, was also released. I extend my heartfelt thanks to Rev. Fr. Jimmy Thekkekadumathil for his dedicated coordination of Mathru Jyothis activities, especially for organizing this memorable Annual Day celebration.

VPV in Parishes: Every year, we organize the *Visuvasa Payirchi Vizha* (VPV) during the first two weeks of May. This year was no exception, as the VPV was successfully conducted in various parishes from April 27, 2025, to May 11, 2025. Recognizing the profound impact of VPV on the faith formation of our children, all the Fathers collaborated wholeheartedly to ensure its seamless execution. Even in our extended mission territories the VPV was conducted with great enthusiasm and dedication. I express my heartfelt appreciation to *Narcheythinilayam* for their timely intervention in providing textbooks and facilitating training programme for the VPV. The dedication and commitment demonstrated by all the Fathers in organizing the VPV is commendable. It is through collaborative efforts like these that we can effectively contribute to the spiritual growth of our children.

Vocation Camps: The Vocation Department organized a series of orientation programmes and a vocation camp in the month of May 2025 to help children understand and reflect on God's call in their lives. The first orientation programme was held on May 1st at Little Flower Forane Church, Manjalumoodu, with 25 students (boys and girls) participating. On May 6th, another session was conducted at Sacred Heart Forane Church, Padanthalumoodu, where 30 students took part. The next day, May 7th, the orientation was held at Nithiravilai Forane with 35 children. On May 9th, it was organized at Kaliyal Forane Church, and 37 students participated in the session. The final orientation programme was held on May 10th at Arukani Forane, and there were 38 participants. In all these places, both boys and girls attended the sessions with great interest. Throughout the programme, sisters from the FCC, SABS, and SH congregations accompanied the team, actively helping in guiding and inspiring the children by sharing their own vocation stories. Following these programmes, a two-day vocation camp was held on May 12th and 13th at St. Mary's Minor Seminary, Mukkoottukal. Four candidates participated in this camp, which gave them a closer experience of seminary life through prayer, sharing, and guidance. I thank Fr. George Kandathil, the Director of vocations and the forane vacation promoters for organizing the camps very well.

Vestition and First Profession at Karode: On 13 May 2025, at St. Joseph's Church, Karode, Sr. Evana Chris CMC, a novice from the CMC Chavara Province, Thuckalay, joyfully received her religious habit and made her First Profession. The liturgical celebration, presided over by me, began at 9:30 AM. Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil, Rev. Fr. Joshy Kulathumkal, Rev. Fr. Vinod Kanakkalil, Rev. Fr. John Joseph, and Rev. Fr. Liju Marattukalam concelebrated the Holy Qurbana. Following the Eucharistic celebration, a short felicitation gathering was held, during which representatives from the parish and various congregations congratulated the newly professed Sister. Sr. Evana Chris expressed her heartfelt thanks to all those present. I extend my sincere congratulations to Sr. Evana Chris CMC and offer her my warmest wishes. May she continue to be a source of inspiration to all whom she encounters, radiating the grace and commitment of her vocation. I also express my deep gratitude to Rev. Fr. Justin Suthesh, the Parish Priest of Karode, and to the parishioners for their excellent organization of the liturgy and the entire event.

Result of Classes X and XII Students: The results of the Class XII and X examinations, conducted by the Tamil Nadu Education Board, were announced on May 6 and 16, 2025, respectively. I am happy to share that all our schools have achieved remarkable performance in these examinations. These excellent results are a testament to the unwavering commitment of the diocese towards providing quality education to our children. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to all our dedicated Fathers and Sisters who have played an integral role in nurturing and guiding our students towards academic success.

Skill Development Programme for Major Seminarians: A one-week Skill Development Programme was conducted for all the major seminarians of the diocese from 12 to 16 May 2025 at Sangamam. Sixteen seminarians participated in the programme. This integral initiative aimed to provide practical knowledge on various subjects useful for their future ministry. Every day, Mr. John Kumari Thozhan conducted a special Tamil class for one and a half hours. Additionally, the following sessions were held during the week: Indian Constitution by Rev. Fr. Printo Kurias, Counselling and Therapy by Rev. Fr. Jimmy, Communication by Rev. Fr. Joseph Santhosh, Discernment by Rev. Fr. Mathanraj, Liturgical Decorum by Rev. Fr. Justin Cheruvilil, Caring for the Uncared by Rev. Fr. Roy Kannanchirayil CMI, Artificial Intelligence by Rev. Fr. Liju Marattukalam. Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil presided over the inaugural meeting. The programme was coordinated by Rev. Fr. Joshy Kulathumkal and Rev. Fr. Bobby Kochuparampil. It was an enriching experience for all the seminarians. At the end of the programme, they made a pilgrimage to our pilgrim Churches for obtaining the plenary indulgences. I express my gratitude to Rev. Fr. Joshy, Director of Major Seminarians, for organizing this programme along with Rev. Fr. Joseph Santhosh.

Residential Camp for Catechetical Students: The Catechetical Department organized a three-day residential camp titled 'HOPE' for students—both girls and boys—who have completed XI and XII at

school. The camp was held on 20, 21, and 22 May 2025 at the St. Alphonsa College campus, Soosaipuram. Each day featured two input sessions covering various topics, including the Christian vision of life, Divine call, career guidance, the Word of God in daily life, salvation of souls, and the importance of prayer. The resource persons for the camp were Rev. Fr. Joseph Santhosh, Rev. Fr. Joshy Kulathumkal, Mr. Russel Raj, Rev. Fr. Anil Raj, and Dr. Jackson. Bro. Godwin animated the students during other times, while the Sisters took special care of the girls. A total of 39 students from nine parishes participated in the camp. Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil presided over the concluding meeting of the programme. I extend my sincere thanks to Rev. Fr. Abilash Xavier for conducting the camp in such a well-organized manner.

Jubilee of Teachers & Annual Convention at Kalluvilai: The Christ Jubilee celebration for the school teachers of the diocese, along with the annual convention, was held at Sinai Retreat Centre, Kalluvilai, on 30 May 2025. The morning session featured a convention talk delivered by Rev. Fr. Antony Nelson, Novice Master at the Pambanvilai OFM Formation House. He focused on the values of a good teacher, drawing inspiration from the life of the Master, Jesus Christ. In the afternoon, the Christ Jubilee celebration took place with a public gathering. Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil presided over the meeting, and the three Provincial Superiors—Rev. Sr. Jessy Therese CMC, Rev. Sr. Celia FCC, and Rev. Sr. Rose Martin SABS—along with the CMI Regional Superior, Rev. Fr. Mathew Arekkalam CMI, were the special guests of honour. The teachers presented songs and cultural programmes centred on the theme of Jubilee. The event concluded at 4:00 PM. I sincerely thank Rev. Fr. Justin Suthesh for organizing the Jubilee event for teachers so effectively.

Jubilee of Catechists & Inauguration of Academic Year: The Christ Jubilee celebration of the Catechists, along with the inauguration of the academic year of the Catechetical Department and Kuzhanthai Issu Iyakkam (KII), was held at Kalluvilai on 31 May 2025. In the morning, a competition of PowerPoint/video presentations on the Seven Sacraments was conducted for the Forane Churches. Three Foranes—Soosaipuram, Thuckalay Pilankalai, and Kaliyal—participated, with Thuckalay Pilankalai securing the first prize. This presentation was followed by a talk by Rev. Fr. Wysilin Xavier, Forane Vicar of Thrithvapuram, who spoke on the importance of the Jubilee Year in the life of catechists. The afternoon session began with a Jubilee procession from Sinai Retreat Centre to Aseer Auditorium, Kalluvilai, followed by a public meeting. Rev. Fr. Thomas Powathuparampil presided over the meeting, and Rev. Fr. Antony Tharakunnel, Parish Priest of Rajagiri, was the chief guest. Fr. Vicar General officially inaugurated the catechetical year and the activities of KII. During the inauguration, Fr. Vicar General, directors of the two departments, representatives of Headmasters (HMs), teachers, and students participated in the lighting of the lamp, symbolizing the sharing of knowledge, and passed the light to all the teachers. The teachers then took an oath to fulfil their responsibilities. For the parish-level inauguration, the Catechetical Department provided guidelines to ensure uniformity across all parishes. The solemn ceremony includes an inaugural address by the unit director, the lighting of the lamp, the teachers' oath with lighted candles, and the blessing by the parish priest. I extend my appreciation to all the parish priests and everyone involved in diligently providing fruitful catechetical formation to our children. Their hard work and dedication play a vital role in nurturing the faith of our young ones. I also thank Rev. Fr. Abilash Xavier and the entire team for organizing the Jubilee of Catechists so well.

INFORMATION

- **Sr. Deepthi FCC**, who served at Bishop's House for the last four years has been transferred on 01 May 2025. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to her for her selfless contributions to our diocese. We wish her God's grace and blessings in her new ministry.
- **Mrs. Mercy aunty from Moolamattam** donated another 2 acres of land near to the Snehavilla, Moolamattam to build an old age home for the poor and the abandoned. The land registration was done on 12 May 2025. We express our heartfelt gratitude for her generous donation and contribution.

- **Sr. Helena Kompanathottathil SDS (81)** was called to eternal rest on 14 May 2025. Sr. Helena was a native of Vellayamkudy, Kattappana. As a religious sister, she served in our diocese almost 35 years in Karode (20 years) and Manjalumoodu (15 years). The funeral service took place on 15 May 2025 at 02:30 PM at the SDS Convent Chapel, Manjalumoodu. Let us thank God for her service in our diocese and pray that the Risen Lord may grant her eternal joy.
- **Mr. P. J. Joseph Vattothukunnel (74)**, beloved father of Sr. Sunila MMM slept in the Lord on 15 May 2025. We extend our heartfelt condolences and prayers to Sr. Sunila and her family members. Let us pray that the merciful Lord grant him eternal joy.
- **Sr. Nirmaletha Cappil SD (69)**, younger sister of Sr. Vineeth Maria SH was called to eternal rest on 16 May 2025. We extend our deepest condolences and prayers to Sr. Vineeth and her family members. Let us pray that the merciful Lord grant her eternal joy.
- **Rev. Fr Sebastian Panachickal(61)**, of the Diocese of Kanjirappally was called to eternal reward on 21 May 2025. Fr. Panachickal served in our Diocese from 2003 to 2007 in following Parishes: Parish Priest at Munchirai (01.11.2003 - 08.02.2006); Parish Priest at Killiyoor (01.11.2003 - 05.03.2004); Parish Priest at Mathapuram (08.02.2006 - 02.05.2006) and Parish Priest at Nithiravilai (02.05.2006 - 03.01.2007). The Funeral Liturgy took place on 23 May 2025 at 01.30 PM at St. Mary's Church, Anikkadu, Kanjirappally. The Parish Priest and parishioners from Munchirai Parish participated in the funeral liturgy. Let us thank God for his service in our diocese and pray that the Risen Lord may grant him eternal joy.
- **Mrs. Rosamma Joseph (81)**, beloved mother of Sr. Elseena Parappallil SH slept in the Lord on 31 May 2025. We extend our heartfelt condolences and prayers to Sr. Elseena and her family members. Let us pray that the merciful Lord grant her eternal joy.
- **Sr. Merlin Jose CMC (77)** was called to eternal rest on 31 May 2025. Sr. Merlin served in our diocese almost 07 years: Puliyaarai clinic (2001-2005) and at Chithankudiyiruppu (2005-2007). Let us thank God for her selfless sacrifices for the good of our diocese. May God grant her eternal rest and welcome her into His loving embrace.
- **Sr. Sunila MMM**, who served at KKSSS office has been transferred on 30 May 2025. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to her for her selfless contributions to our diocese. We wish her God's grace and blessings in her new ministry.
- **Sr. Mary Rani SD** joined in the Bishop's House Community on 31 May 2025 and took charge as House Manager of Bishop's House. We welcome her wholeheartedly and wish God's blessings in the new assignment.
- Please find below the appointments made after publishing the transfer list 2025 on 02 May 2025:
Rev. Fr. John (Geo) Ooroth, from the diocese of Idukki, is appointed as Parish Priest of St. Mary's Church, Ariyur and Missionary in Madurai with effect from 24 May 2025.
Rev. Fr. Joseph (Jobin) Vettukallel, from the diocese of Idukki, is appointed as Parish Priest of Holy Family Forane Church, Arukani with effect from 24 May 2025.
Rev. Fr. Sebastian (Jiji) Puthenpurackal, from the diocese of Miao, is appointed as Parish Priest of St. Mathew's Church, Annikkarai with effect from 24 May 2025
Rev. Fr. Sunil Antony is appointed as Assistant Parish Priest at St. Mary's Forane Church, Kudamaloor, Changanacherry Archdiocese with effect from 27 May 2025.
Rev. Fr. Augustin (Anoop) Thathappally is appointed as Assistant Parish Priest at St. Xavier's Church, Villoonni-Arppookkara, Changanacherry Archdiocese with effect from 27 May 2025.
Rev. Sr. Rosia Puthiyaparampil SABS is appointed as Notary in the Eparchial Tribunal with effect from 24 May 2025.
- **My Europe Visit:** As planned and already informed to you, I have been visiting Europe from 13 May to 03 June 2025. During this visit, I had the opportunity to go on a pilgrimage to Ars in France and Assisi in Italy, representing our diocese in this Jubilee Year. I was also able to visit our benefactors and friends in France, Germany, Belgium, Switzerland, and Rome. It was a meaningful occasion to meet and spend time with our priests who are working or studying in Europe. I had the joy of

meeting Fr. Robert Matheus, Fr. Josy Puthenpurackal, Fr. Alex Puthettu, Fr. Jinu Thekkethala, Fr. John Paul, and Bro. Jubin. I also visited the sisters from our diocese who are serving in different parts of Europe. Above all, I had the special blessing of meeting the newly elected Holy Father — a truly grace-filled moment for me and for our diocese. I sincerely thank you for your prayers during these days of travel. A special word of gratitude goes to our Vicar General for overseeing the general administration of the diocese in my absence.

FORTHCOMING MAJOR EVENTS

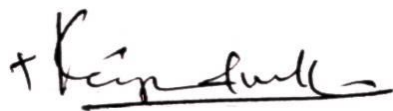
12 June	-	Jubilee of Missionaries at Madurai
13 June	-	Palliative Care Building Blessing at Moolamattam
14 June	-	Jubilee of Religious at Kalluvilai
16 June	-	Academic Year Inauguration at Minor Seminary
17 June	-	Priests' Conference
22 June	-	Jubilee of Children(KII) at Kalluvilai
27 June	-	New Priests' Day at Kattathurai
29 June	-	Animation Programme for Kaikars and accountants

Priests' Conference
Place: Sangamam
Date: 17 June 2025
Time: 09.30 am – 01.00 pm

CONCLUSION

As we conclude the month dedicated to Our Blessed Mother, we now enter the month dedicated to the Heart of Jesus. Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus is a devotion to Jesus Christ Himself, but in the particular ways of meditating on His interior life and on His threefold love – His divine love, His burning love that fed His human will, and His sensible love that affects His interior life. It is a symbol of that divine love which he shared with the Father and the Holy Spirit, but which he, the Word made Flesh, alone manifests through a weak and perishable body, since “in Him dwells the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” Let us inculcate devotion to the Heart of Jesus among our people in ways that are possible during these times of the pandemic. May the Heart of Jesus forgive the sins of humanity and bring an end to this end that has devastated the world!

With my prayers and blessings,
Yours in Christ Jesus,



† **George Rajendran SDB**
Bishop of Thuckalay

